No. 14

An
Inaugural Dissertation
On
Amenorrhoea

Respectfully Submitted
To

The Medical Faculty
Of
The University of Pennsylvania
By

Thos. E. Powe Admitted March 3d 1823.
Of
South Carolina.

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Amenorrhœa.

Amenorrhœa is derived from the Greek words a priv: μην a month and ρεω to flow. It consists in a suppression or partial obstruction of the menstrual evacuation from other causes than disease, pregnancy and old age. Cullen has placed this disease in the class locales, & order epischeses, and divides it into emansio mensium, suppressio mensium and difficilis menstruatio, the situation of this last however is not strictly correct, though it may be considered as a variety of the suppressio, as the discharge is temporarily suppressed. It is my object to treat only of the two first.

The emansio mensium is when the discharge does not occur at the time when it should take place. The period however for the flow of the menses is so much influenced by climate, the mode of living, the peculiarities of the constitution, and structure of the body, that it

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attempt to lay down any data for their appear-
-ance is at once futile and impracticable.
Thus in northern legions, the period is retar-
-ded to the eighteenth or twentieth year. In
the temperate zone thirteen to fifteen is the
usual time, while farther south it is not
unusual or uncommon to see girls of the
age of ten or eleven years old with their off-
-springs in their arms. It is not therefore from
the age of a person Retention is to be considered
a disease; but it is, when about the custom-
-ary time of the flow of the menses, many
unpleasant disorders arise which from their na
-ture we are induced to attibute them to a
retention.— These are ushered in by a general
languor and sluggishness of the body, appetite
often bad or fanciful, having an extraordinary
desire for the eating of hard and indigestible
substances as chalk, lime-plastering, clay sand,
charcoal &c. at the same time a disgust or loath

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=ing of the common and proper articles of di=
=et. The bowels for the most part are constipated
accompanied with bad breath acid & fetid
eructation with many other signs of dyspepsia.
These symptoms continue for a while when
the lazy complexion subsides and we have in
its stead, a pale, yellow and often a greenish
color of the skin, together with a vomiting
of a grainish matter from which the disease
takes its name. The lips and gums exchange
their vermilion hue for a greenish paleness.
The eye is dull and heavy, the lower part
of the orbit is a little swollen and of a dark
=ish color: The pulse generally is small and
slow but by the slighest exercise it becomes
quick and irregular. Palpitations of the heart,
also laboring and hurried respiration are indu
=ced by bodily exertion and mental emotion.
Syncope sometimes occur, also convulsions: headache
dulness, vertigo impaired memmory afterwards

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ensue, amounting in some instances to confirm=ed mania and idiotism. The mind is in an irritable and melancholy state, which causes the unhappy sufferer to avoid compa=ny and seek solitude. — If the disease is not arrested here it runs on into Phthisis Pulmo=nalis: or the flesh becomes soft and flaccid, the perspiration checked, oedematous swellings of the extremities are succeeded by anasarca, and death finally closes the melancholy scene. however in the worst stages of this complaint, when death appears to be fast depending and almost inevitable: a small discharge of mucous or serous matter, somewhat colored with blood makes its appearance and gradually gives signs of returning health. It comes on at first at distant and irregular periods, it by degrees assumes a more natural appearance, and a more regular time of recurring, until final=ly the strength of the system being restored

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and by the influence of habit, its perfect nature and character are fully established: when a well, soon behold her, who had been a cheerful [illegible] chlorotic girl in her prime of life, a healthy disposition, a blooming complexion with all the other [illegible]. But indeed so very rare does the disease take such a favorable tendency: that we not unfrequently see cases which resist the virtues of the best remedies, and baffle the skill of the most learned Physician.

Dissections of those that have died with retention of the menses, show the ovaria to be in a diseased or schirrous state. The Uterus, Liver, Stomach, Pancreas and mesenteric glands have also been found in a diseased condition.

Causes. The disease we are now treating, may depend on a malformation of the genital organs; a deficiency, or deranged state of the ovaria; an imperfect development of the Uterus

an imperforated hymen: But by far the most numerous cases is debility of the system in general and Chlorosis in particular. what sometimes changes one case gives origin to this disease is plethora or too much fulness.

Treatment. In conducting the cure of this complaint, I shall make allusion only to such cases as it is in the power of the Practitioner to relieve. when the menses are retained in consequence of an imperforated hymen, it will be seen sufficiently obvious, by the girl about the usual time of menstruation possessing good spirits and health, and showing she had arrived to the years of maturity by the enlargement of her Mamma; the healthy change which takes place in her voice and manner: and when about the accustomed periods of menstruating she has all the symptoms indicating such an action going on and no discharge appearing while

at the same time the abdomen continues to enlarge when such symptoms as these present under such circumstances we should not hesitate to make an examination, we begin we should then be more sound to be undertaken immediate relief will be afforded by puncturing it with a trocar or some other sharp pointed instrument.

In cases where this disease has arisen from the indication of cure are perfectly clear and intelligible, the object we should have in view is in the first place to restore the system to its normal strength and vigor: and secondly to administer some stimulant that would have a direct action on the uterine tissues. For the purpose of fulfilling the first indication such a course should be pursued, that is best calculated to give tone to the system.

We must direct for our patient a generous nutritious diet, with a liberal use of wine, particularly avoiding those articles which disagree with

her, also those that are liable to remittent or intermittent cramps, either nothing taking in a carriage, or on horse back the last is painful: care must be taken however that it should not be carried to such an extent as to induce fatigue. The warm bath impregnated with common salt succeeded by frictions with dry warm or a flesh brush should be used.
Clothing is an article of considerable consequence in the cure of this complaint the patient should always be kept warm and comfortable: sometimes it is even necessary she should wear flannel next the skin, and above all particular attention should be taken to keep her feet perfectly warm and dry as by neglecting this simple injunction the cure may be wonderfully retarded or effected at all. The patient should enjoy the benefit of pleasant and agreeable company and nothing I conceive could have a better tendency than permitting her to attend parties as the cure

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bination of exercise music and a pleasant society would give vigor to her frame and bring into ejection all those warm and pleasant feelings of the mind which exercise such a powerful influence over the body, therefore the different watering places in the summer should be resorted as something also may be anticipated from the Tonic property of the waters.

The different calybeate preparations must be used the best of these is the carbonate of Iron in doses from 10 to 15 grs two to three times a day. this drug however most generally disagrees with the stomach and to avoid that inconvenience we should prescribe a neat and an agreeable prescription made as follows,

℞. Rubigo Ferri ℥ss.
Cort. Aurant. ℥ss.
Rad. Gentian. ℥ss.
Vin: Oport. ℔ij These ingredients in a bottle well stirred should stand

two or three days in a warm situation, it then should be decanted when it is prepared for use: half a wine glass-full should be given several times a day.

The teas of chammomile flowers of the hop & quassia are highly efficacious tonics, and were suited to this case.

Cold-Bathing in the disease before us should be used with considerable caution and discrimination when the system possesses sufficient susceptibility to produce reaction it most assuredly is beneficial, should this however not occur it will be decidedly injurious.

When at the commencement of this disease there is sickness at the stomach nausea or vomiting we should prescribe an emetic of fifteen or twenty grs. of ipecac. to clear and cleanse the stomach from acid and inactive fluids. During the whole course of the disease the bowels must be carefully and

regularly attended to they are generally in a rapid and inactive state which by a sympathetic action is communicated to the whole system: to obviate this condition of things the Electric or Electro Bill given once or twice a day as the occasion may demand is well adapted.

We now arrive to the second object of cure which is to ~~stimulate~~ use such means as are best calculated to stimulate the vessels of the Uterus: here again the different kinds of exercise may be mentioned as possessing such a power; also as having the same tendency are frictions of the lumbar region, and inside of the thighs, Leeches applied to the Pelvis have been much recommended as acting on the principle of revulsion. Electricity passed through the Uterine region at the time when tourniquets are applied around the thighs stimulate in a considerable degree that organ.

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What may be considered as very useful & should always be resorted to in cases of this kind is the bathing of the feet and legs in warm water just before going to bed; or sitting over the fumes of warm water.

As the impediments to the common flux of nature in retention are almost entirely if not invariable dependent on constitutional causes, so consequently it is only necessary in most of instances to use such means for unloading them as operate on the general system, but however in those cases where this mode of treatment will not prove successful we are to resort to that class of medicines called emmenagogues; and these, from their direct and stimulant action on the Uterus should be employed with a sound and discriminating judgment; to prevent them from being injurious: the regulations that should govern their administration will be mentioned under the head dysmenorrhœa, as being more used

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in and applicable to this form of the disease. It has been mentioned that in some cases of chlorosis many symptoms appear which bear a very strikeing resemblance to Phthisis Pulmonalis, though by paying particular attention to them it may be seen it is not connected with diseased Lungs, but is has a tendence that way and should it be suffered to run on for any length of time, it certainly would become confirmed consumption it may be distinguished from Phth. Pulmon. by the following signs. The pulse although frequent is not subject to regular exacerbations, a full inspiration gives no pain, and but little disposition to cough, the cough is not encreased by motion or on going to bed, but it is worse in the morning, attended with an expectoration of Phlegm, it is not short like that excited by Tubercles but comes in fits, and sometimes convulsive, at the same time palpitations with pain

the hysterical symptoms accompanying this complaint the digestive powers are almost always deranged. In this disease a gentle emetic must occasionally be given, and the bowels are to be kept in a healthy state, as an emetic. Dr. Sydenham says it has by some been proved through life not known for what reason, indeed its operation is so quick and its effects so confined and limited, it appears to me that one of a more pervading nature would have a better tendency, as Ipecacuanha either alone or combined with Tartar emetic. Mr. Burns strongly recommends hemlock combined with the oxide of Zinc as being well adapted to this complaint; also ammonia given in the form of an emulsion with oil for relieving the cough; if the patient be in the city she should remove to the country or lake midland exposure. The diet should be light but nourishing; milk porridge agreed with such patients very well, but the lighter

digestibi

digestible kinds of meat, tea, &c. be preferable. If the disease should resist the power of this treatment, and continue to become worse, she should be directed to go to some warm climate: as being the most certain and speedy means of relief. Emmenagogues appear to be of no advantage in this disease.

When the tendency of the mind is dependent on a plethoric state of the system we can usually to reduce the system down to the health standard by the judicious employment of venesection, cooling cathartics, abstaining diet, &c.

Suppressio Menseum may be divided into checked and obstructed. It is called checked when it is stopped from some cause during its flow, and obstructed when from the operation of some agent during the interval its recurrence is prevented. The causes most liable to produce check-

-ed menstruation are violent bathing, or the
cold application of cold to the body, or
vigorous exercise: which not only cause
the flow to be discontinued, but produce
considerable pains in the Uterine region,
sometimes contraction of the stomach and
intestines, hysterical symptoms and not unfre-
-quently considerable fever. The derangement
is not always only temporary, the former
strength and vigor of the Uterus may not
be restored for a considerable time after
these symptoms subside. The most speedy
and effectual means of relieving these distress-
-ing effects are, by the employment of the
venisection, afterwards placing the patient
in bed, and give her large doses of laudanum
with some ipecacuanha or the saline julep,
and warm drinks: what else it may, and
is a combination of Camphor with opium
through if the stomach be so irritable.

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as to most whatever is swallowed or any fluid composed of laudanum with camphor or ipecacuanha should be thrown at the lower. The abdomen must be well fomented and rubbed. Should this lose be accompanied with fever or a full plethoric habit the lancet must not be withheld. Provided these means be not sufficient to restore the discharge at the regular period, we must proceed as directed hereafter.

I mentioned above that the menses may be prevented from occurring at the regular period by the interference of some cause during the interval which is called obstructed menstruation. It is well known and universally admitted, when the menses have been once established in their course they cannot be suppressed with impunity by any other cause than conception. Now with the single exception, as soon as they deviate from

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their monthly appearance we have sufficient evidence to believe there exists some barrier to the common process of nature, which if suffered to remain for any time will become a source of considerable inconvenience if not even danger. This disease has by some authors been divided into Idiopathic and Symptomatic, which appears to me to be perfectly correct and proper, for if we attribute primary diseases to the Stomache, Liver & other organs, why should we not to the Uterus, for it is a viscus that performs important and independant functions, it possesses a vast degree of sensibility, and in every respect appears to be equally liable to the attacks of Idiopathic diseases as the other viscera, & may unquestionably when much affected, strongly influence the constitution.

The Causes producing this disease are Cold, fear, anxiety of mind, confinement, frequent abortions, excessive venery &c. Obstruction however

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[illegible] of the [illegible].
Now the urethra also is [illegible] at least [illegible]
[illegible] at the same time it [illegible] the [illegible] that
the food which should have [illegible] [illegible]
to the [illegible] takes a [illegible] to serve as the
[illegible] [illegible] of the body from which it flows
& periodical flow; for instance from the Cyst.
[illegible] [illegible] a large hemorrhoid [illegible]
A very remarkable case of a [illegible] [illegible]
was communicated in the 17th No. of the [illegible]
[illegible] to Mr. [illegible] from M.D. of [illegible] in which
the female has a daily discharge from the
[illegible] and [illegible] at the [illegible] menstruating. Another case related by the same gentleman
in the same No. where his patient has a monthly
[illegible] from the [illegible] [illegible]. These discharges are always preceded by symptoms
similar to those indicating a flow of the
[illegible].

In forming our opinion of the Prognosis in this disease, we are to be governed by the causes which have given rise to it the length of time [illegible] and the state of the [illegible] health in other respects. when suddenly obstructed in consequence of cold, excessive passion &c it may be easily restored by pursuing a proper course. but in cases where it has been of long standing and [illegible] attended we are to consider them as unfavorable.

Dissections of those that have died of this disease shew the [illegible] to be [illegible] in a similar manner as in retention.

The immediate and remote effects of obstruction are [illegible] by the [illegible] state of the system. particularly with regard to a weak debilitated, and a plethoric habit. Also by the condition of the individual organs which already disposed to disease, may thus be excited more readily to a morbid action.

treatment. In our endeavor to cure this disease we must recollect that it may be connected with two very different states of the system. In those cases where it occurs in a debilitated condition of the system we must proceed much in the same way as recommended under the head retention. The patient should take exercise on horse-back proportioned to her strength. It would be advisable for her if possible to reside in the country. All the tonics that were mentioned under the treatment of Retention as the preparations of iron and cod liver oil, bepearable bitters, are those here. If there is no too decided chlorotic disposition the cold-bath must be employed, but should this produce head-ache, chillings and fever it should be discontinued and the tepid bath substituted. As coinciding with these means we should have recourse to the various emmenagogues and none appears to be

entitled to as high a standing as the Polygala

Seneca, & this article was first recommended by Doct Hartshorn of this City, as possessing the valuable properties in the cure of this disease, which has also been corroborated by the simple experience of Doct Chapman. I have myself seen this medicine succeed in restoring the discharge in two cases, who had for a considerable time resisted the powers of various articles of this class, in both cases it was given at first in the proportion of ℥ss or ℥j, at the decoction twenty-four hours, and when the menstruous effort was expected, it was administered in as large doses as the stomach could bear. In neither case was it necessary to continue the medicine longer than three weeks, at the menstrual evacuation was restored and the patients recovered entirely. Should the simple decoction disagree with

the patient some aromatics as orange peel, cinnamon, gingerwort should be added. During the interval it is advised to discontinue it for a week or two, as it becomes nauseous and offensive to the stomach, if not injurious. Dr Chapman thinks it is well adapted to those cases where the deciduous membrane is formed; when this state or condition of the Uterus exists the menstrual discharge is invariably suspended the reason is obvious enough for the two actions are totally incompatible with each other as there is no doubt the vessels which secrete the humors are now concerned in the production of this new body.

Pinch Gum Guiac. bi. is highly recommended by Dr Powers in the complaint before us; he observes that from an experience of thirty years he has in no single instance had this remedy to fail him, when the disease was not connected

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with some visceral obstruction or constitutional derangement. and if we reflect on the extensive experience and the undoubted veracity of this learned Physician we cannot for a moment hesitate, to employ it in all cases where it is admissible with promptness and perseverance. The Tinct. he employs is different from the formula in the shops in having ℥viij of the Gum Guiac. instead of iv. he advises a teaspoonful of Tinct. to be given three times a day gradually increasing the quantity. The Doct. again observes it is admirably suited, to the detachment of, or changing the action that produces the diseased mucous membrane.

The punitive Sabina from its well known stimulant effects on the Uterus appears to promise to be in cases of extreme debility and torpor, a useful and an important emenagogue. It was first brought into public notice by Dr Home of Edinburg about half a century ago, who has strong

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testimony in its favor. The high authority of Cullen however, who was very sceptical with regard to the virtues of all emmenagogues threw it back once more into partial disuse, it is at present only occasionally resorted to, it is given in doses of fifteen or twenty grs. of the powdered leaves three or four times a day.

Helleborus Niger is an article that possesses no ordinary powers as an emmenagogue, it was first recommended by Dr. Mead, who considered it as highly useful in obstructed menses. Doct Physick also concurs in that belief and observes he scarcely ever saw a difficult case cured without its use. It most commonly is given in the form of Tinct. Melampodii, in the quantity of thirty or forty drops, several times a day.

To the number of Emmenagogues already enumerated we might enter into a full detail of the virtues of Rubia Tinctorum, Cantharides, Phosphorus Tetrachloride preparations &c. But it appears

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to me that it would only be an unnecessary trespass on your time and patience.

About the period the menstrual effort is expected to be made, we should be vigilant in our attention and prompt in the administration of proper remedies, as by such a course much good may be done, by giving at this time an emetic, that will produce an active and vigorous impression on the stomach; by an associated action that condition of the Uterus will be apt to be aroused, which is necessary for it to perform its secretory function: they should be accompanied with demulcentium, together with at night a pill of opium. Blisters have also been recommended to be applied to the region of the Uterus, or on the lumbar region, and to the inside of the thighs.

When we meet with a case of this disease where the pulse is full and strong,

the face flushed, the eyes red and inflamed, the skin dry and warm, pains in the head & lumbar region, a sensation of weight and full=ness in different parts of the body:— the Lan==cet should be used, and indeed the anti==phlogistic plan should be strictly adhered to as frequent purging, low diet &c. when by this treatment the system is reduced to the natural standard, and the menses still con==tinue obstructed, we should cautiously inter==pose some of the mild emenagogues, with an occasional purge consisting of Aloes and Rhu==barb or Calomel.

Thus Gentlemen, I have to the extent of my abilities performed the last requisite imposed on every candidate of this institution for a degree. In no part do I as==sume to myself anything as original, but have merely given those ideas which I have collected from yourselves & my reading.

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Should I be so fortunate as to meet your approbation the height of my ambition will be obtained; In closing this dissertation I cannot refrain from expressing to you, my deep sense of gratitude for the many use=ful and important lessons you have taught me: That you may long continue to adorn, those high and responsible offices you now occupy is

the ardent wish

of

Tho. E. Powe.